

VICTIM ADVOCATES' NETWORK

"A Voice for Victims"



May 2015



Art created through therapy sessions of child victims of war, many of whom are victims of horrific sexual assaults. Art and trauma counseling are helping them to heal.

Dear Advocates,

I am pleased to announce today the launch of the Attorney General's Victim Services & Outreach Division, which focuses resources on vulnerable victims in critical need including victims of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as the state-wide OAG Victim Advocates' Network. We hope to serve as a resource for all advocates across Indiana, from prosecutors' offices, to domestic violence shelters, sexual assault centers, and many others who serve victims on the local, state and federal levels, who will benefit from connecting with in my office.

Through my work as your Attorney General, I have witnessed the important work of victim advocates who often may be undervalued. Frequently in the background, victim advocates play such a critical role in helping victims after significant traumatic events in not only navigating the judicial process in a case, but in helping the victims to truly begin to heal.

Take Back the Night



In April, the Attorney General's Office participated in the "Take Back the Night" event in Lawrenceburg, in Dearborn County. Cathy Dwyer, Program Director for Rape Crisis Support and Advocacy Services of the Community Mental Health Center, has been a strong and leading voice for victims for nearly 20 years. She and her staff organize and host this outstanding event for the public each year to an overflow crowd. As in many communities, the Clothesline Project highlights the trauma of individual victims, who decorate T-shirts to display. Especially touching were the tiny shirts of the youngest victims, who in later years, made the t-shirts to express the pain they first suffered at a young age.

Dearborn and Ohio Prosecutor Aaron Negangard, provided touching remarks about his work for and on behalf of victims. Aaron is an especially strong advocate for crime

The voices and service to victim advocates are invaluable and without them, many victims might not begin healing. While there sometimes can be closure perhaps in seeing justice carried out in the judicial system, true healing is individual to the person, and the trauma that victims experience is often overlooked in our society.

I also recognize and believe that victim advocates' work is truly difficult on a day to day basis. They deal with crisis situations which can't be put off until next week, or until a more convenient time presents itself on their schedules. As victim advocates, they know that if they don't deal effectively with that phone call or situation, that there may not be another chance. We also realize that they see a multitude of not only tragic but daunting circumstances, often all with one victim. Mental health needs, drug and alcohol addictions, abuse, and many other causes of suffering can come to the forefront when working with victims and families.

For these reasons, my idea of a Victim Advocate Network, to support the daily, difficult work of advocates, is my goal. Strength exists in numbers, as the adage says, so I want the OAG to serve as a force multiplier to all of you to build capacity for service to victims.

My staff in working with victim advocates all over the State of Indiana on a daily basis, will provide support to you in several ways. In the fall of 2015, my office will host a training for all advocates who wish to attend, and this will be an annual event. Other training will be held throughout the year, both on-line through distance education, and via regional events. Victim advocates will receive a certificate for training.

The trainings will provide updates on trauma based research, critical case law which has legal impact upon victims, trends in victim services, and highlights of legislation or successful programs my staff observes across the state. We also want to help where we see trends which suggest a policy or idea is not working. My staff will have forums for the exchange of ideas and suggestions from all of you, as we build upon the knowledge of one another.

Thank you in advance for participating in this effort, the Victim Advocate Network of Indiana. We welcome your thoughts and ideas as we all work together to serve victims in our state.

Sincerely,

Greg Zoeller

Indiana Attorney General

victims, and is passionate about the work he does for the community. As the primary organizer of the first Child Advocacy Center in Indiana, Aaron has always been such an advocate for victims and we appreciate his work and partnership in this area.

Additionally, Prosecutor Negangard serves as Legislative Chair for the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, and is the President of the Prosecutors' Association. For several years, Aaron has devoted countless hours advocating on behalf of victims at the Indiana State House.

In addition to Aaron, Jennifer Thuma of the OAG Victim Services & Outreach Division gave a presentation on human trafficking, runaways and victim issues to the capacity filled room which was surrounded by victim t-shirts prepared for the Clothesline Project, and candles were lit to commemorate the voices of victims.

The entire audience gave a big thank you to the many victim advocates who help Cathy—almost all are tireless volunteers, who have literally dedicated years to helping victims. These are all people making big impacts in the lives of others.

Also in attendance at the event were victim advocates from Safe Passage, the domestic violence shelter and trauma service organization which serves Dearborn, Ohio, Franklin, Ripley, and Switzerland Counties. Representatives from law enforcement and many other community members gathered

From Surviving to Thriving--Michelle Corrao as an Inspiration for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Many in the community and across the State of Indiana, know Michelle as an outstanding and inspirational public servant, lead, and above all, a compassionate voice for victims. As a survivor of a horrific assault, one can barely imagine surviving the events which forever shaped her life, much less to heal, thrive and be a leading advocates for victims. The Attorney General's Office Victim Services and Outreach Division specifically highlights Michelle in our first newsletter for several reasons, above all, to share her story so as to give courage and strength to other victims.

While living in Fort Wayne some years ago, Michelle was viciously attacked outside her apartment by 3 assailants, sexually assaulted, and then thrown into the trunk of a car. The assailants stopped the car to rob a store, and through the incredible intuition of a law enforcement officer who was nearby, Michelle's life was saved. She named her son after Detective Arthur Billingsley, whom she calls the "hero" who literally saved her life.

Michelle shares many thoughts with victims to help them through their struggles to recover. One of those thoughts is that it takes a lot of work to heal from extreme trauma, and that some days a victim will feel she or he is making progress, and then other days, the opposite-that the victim experiences set-backs. This is normal, she shares. She encourages victims of sexual assault to let themselves be sad, be angry . . . to feel all of the things that a person often experiences, and to realize that healing from extreme trauma takes a lot of time and a lot of work.

After years of hard work and determination, Michelle leads a happy, fulfilling and blessed life she says, with a wonderful husband and children who bring light into her life every day. She truly has a passion for the work she does, and knows that her service to victims is her calling in life. To learn more about Michelle's story, and to encourage victims along their healing path, please see www.michellecorrao.com.

together for this event. A very sincere and heart felt thank you to all for all that you do. You are making a difference.

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network, the following shocking statistics tell a story of sexual assault in the United States.

****One in four women**

****44% of victims are under 18**

****80% of victims are under 30**

****68% of victims don't report the assault**

Judicial Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)--Abby Kuzma to Serve on State Steering Committee

Abby Kuzma, Chief Counsel for the Victim Services & Outreach Division of the Indiana Attorney General's Office, was recently invited by the Indiana Supreme Court to serve on the State Steering Committee for JDAI. as it seeks to further ways in which children can be served in the justice system. The OAG Victim Services and Outreach Division highly values this opportunity to participate in this important effort.

First established and founded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, JDAI is a concept adopted in a number of states, as society looks at solving the roots of problems and why a juvenile may be before a magistrate or judge. A story which highlights the JDAI approach and one in particular

involved a young child of approximately 6 years of age faced detention for bringing a gun to school (the school had a zero tolerance policy for weapons). By asking the right questions through a JDAI based approach, it was determined that the young boy had a mother suffering from schizophrenia, and brought the gun to school to save her from committing suicide. Clearly a family and a child in need, an assistive approach was clearly needed in this instance.

In these ways, JDAI approaches can greatly assist in helping a young person in need of services.



Attorney General Zoeller Launches "Not Buying it Campaign."

As part of a comprehensive outreach effort Attorney General Zoeller launched the Anti-Demand, "Not Buying It" education efforts state-wide prior to the Final Four held in Indianapolis. The campaign billboards and information were put up and distributed just prior to the Final Four held in Indianapolis this past March. The ad campaign ramped up efforts to combat child sex trafficking. The average age at which children become victims of sex trafficking is 13 and the average age of death of a person having been involved in prostitution is 34. The most common cause of death is homicide. In partnership with the Outdoor Advertising Association and Clear Channel, billboards were strategically placed on major highways and other locations to begin to educate the public, focused on individuals who would buy commercial sex. Others joining Zoeller in the launch included Congresswoman Brooks, the Indiana State Police, and many other key partners in the effort to combat crimes against children.

Heading up the effort for the OAG is Abigail Kuzma, Chief Counsel for Victim Services & Outreach, who has worked tirelessly on this issue for many years.

Another important component of the "Not Buying It" education campaign launch included a partnership with the Indiana Pacers' Lavoy Allen and Donnie Walsh, and representatives of the Colts through Matt Hasselbeck, and IndyCar driver Ed Carpenter, all of whom filmed public service announcements. The AG's Office appreciates the outstanding leadership shown by these sports celebrities in sending a message that Indiana is Not Buying It!



Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence--A Great Partner in Education and Training

The Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) continues to be a great partner to the Attorney General's Office Victim Services by hosting a state-wide webinar early this spring to promote and refresh training on the Address Confidentiality Program and the Hope Card. Two more webinars are planned for June and July for domestic violence shelters specifically on the subjects of Human Trafficking.



Candle lighting at the close of "Take Back the Night" signified healing and remembrance of victims.

ICADV--Lethality Screenings & Fatality Review

The OAG Victim Services attended the initial State-Wide Fatality Review Team meeting recently, led by ICADV. This is an invaluable, and painstaking project, by which cases involving domestic violence fatalities across the state are reviewed carefully to look for any trends and to find new ways to reach victims before they become fatalities.

One crucial project ICADV led a few years ago, was to create a Lethality Screening tool for first responders and others. Incredibly, since the adoption of the Lethality Screening, of those screened, no deaths had occurred in the 6 years in which the screening tool has been in use, until the first one this year, demonstrating the effectiveness of the Lethality Screening.

A significant challenge are those victims who did not have a single contact with any judicial system, victim advocate, law enforcement or other entities prior to the fatality. How can victims be reached?

We appreciate the leadership and work of ICADV on this critical area. The research, data, and thorough review of cases is helpful to prevent fatalities.

Victim Blaming: Still Prevalent in Our Society

As incredible as it would seem today, victim blaming is still alive and well, and occurs with alarming frequency in our society. Shocking observations made in conjunction especially with sexual assault are often overheard. "She shouldn't have been drinking." "She should have known better." "Have

you seen what these young women wear now? It's no wonder this happened, " are all statements heard recently from all facets of society, from both men and women.

Why is victim blaming still prevalent? One theory put forth by the *Canadian Resource Center for Victims of Crime (Centre Canadien de Ressources Pour Les Victimes de Crimes)* describes the notion that by blaming victims, the speaker is insulated from harm herself/himself. (i.e. "I wear turtle necks all year and don't stay out past 9:00 p.m. That won't happen to me." Thus the victim is different from the person blaming the victim. This kind of victim blaming is also more likely to occur when a person is like them--a young college student, a mother from the same socio-economic background, etc. Perhaps according to this theory, the speaker needs to blame the victim even more in order to feel protected herself or himself.

A second perspective on victim blaming is the situation when the victim is socially marginalized. For example, society frequently doesn't sympathize with prostitutes or drug addicts who go missing or whom are murdered. Why is this? It is easy to see a drug addicted prostitute as a "throw-away" person, but perhaps upon a more careful look, as statistics show, that victim was likely forced into the sex trade at the age of 13 (the average age) and victimized throughout the rest of her life. With the average age of death at 34, a child victim then is labeled a criminal after aging out of juvenile years. Many traffickers/pimps use children, they often force them into drug use, or they become addicted to cope with the horrific trauma. Thus by the age of average death of 34, the child victim is now a drug addicted person and evokes little sympathy when she loses her life on the streets.

As the adage says, a society is measured by the way it treats the least fortunate, and surely this includes even these victims whom society has marginalized.

Trauma and Relationships--(Or "Where did My Friends Go?")

A common occurrence with any kind of traumatic experience, whether it is victim centered or other kinds of trauma, is changing relationships which often results. Some individuals a victim views as steady-fast closest friends, and sometimes family members, will notice that the people are no longer as close or maybe aren't in the picture at all. Other people, perhaps acquaintances or someone the victim knew from the past, may reach out and become strong helpers and supporters. It may be helpful to share with the victim that this is not uncommon, and often relates more to the other people than to the victim herself or himself. The victim shouldn't blame herself when friends fall away. It is difficult to accept and to realize, but this is often a reflection on the "friend" and not on the victim.

Address Confidentiality and Hope Card Programs--OAG

Participation in the **Address Confidentiality Program** has increased by over 10 percent in the last few months, after an increased state-wide outreach effort. Individuals who are victims of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault, with a longer term protective order (6 months at least) are eligible to apply for this program. The program, which was adopted into the Indiana Code in 2001, allows a victim to maintain a confidential mailing address through the OAG. A key change made by the OAG in 2015 is the shortening of the required length of the protective order, which previously, by policy, was 1 year.

Additionally, individuals with longer term protective orders are eligible to apply for a Hope Card, which puts all information from the protective order, on the card, which a victim can carry in her or his wallet. Victims of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence are eligible to apply.

Both programs require that a victim advocate assist the victim with the application. The OAG Victim Services believes this is important for safety planning purposes, and victim advocates are invaluable in so many ways to these victims.

For more information, to request a training, or to request log-in credentials, please email VictimAdvocateNetwork@atq.in.gov.

Missing Persons' Day--May 25



Please remember those who are missing on May 25--National Missing Persons' Day. Having a loved one go missing is one of the most painful experiences a parent, child or other family member can experience. As a victim advocate, perhaps a way to remember and help missing persons would be to distribute or re-post photos of missing persons from the National Center for Missing Children or from one of the other established missing persons' databases available. While missing persons would seem to be a rare occurrence, the Indiana State Police currently maintains an astounding 17 pages on-line of missing Indiana children only (not including

adults).

Attorney General Zoeller meets with 2015 International Woman of Courage Award Winner

AG Zoeller met with Rosa Julieta Montano Salvatierra, one of ten women honored by the U.S. State Department for its "Women in Courage Award" this spring. As the founder and director of the Oficina Juridica Para la Mujer, in Bolivia, Ms. Montano Salvatierra has led the way in providing legal assistance to women in some of the most emblematic cases of rape, sexual assault and human trafficking in her country. Jailed under a dictatorship, Rosa is a symbol and inspiration for women around the world. Her advocacy has resulted in legislative changes, greater penalties for sexual assault crimes, and advances in many legal rights for women. Ms. Montano Salvatierra was especially touched to meet General Zoeller upon learning of his compassion for victims, especially in the area of human trafficking. The entire Victim Services and Outreach Division felt privileged to meet her and to hear some of the incredible work she has done under very difficult circumstances. May Rosa continue to be a beacon of hope and light for all in Bolivia, and around the world.



Rosa, pictured here in her office in La Paz, the capitol of Bolivia, was honored in Washington, D.C., before visiting Indianapolis. The Attorney General's Office was honored to host her in the office before her return to Bolivia.

State Representative Christina Hale Assists in Human Trafficking Outreach for Final Four--SOAP Project

The Victim Services Division thanks Representative Christina Hale for taking time away from her very busy schedule at the height of the legislative session to do grass roots outreach and education on human trafficking prior to the Final Four in Indianapolis this spring. She and other volunteers took educational materials and hotline information for victims to hotels all over the city and suburbs prior to the Final Four. The SOAP project, begun by Theresa Flores, a human trafficking survivor in Columbus, Ohio, involved approximately 30 volunteers hosted by Holy Rosary Catholic Church near downtown Indianapolis, to package soap with hotline information for victims to call for help. During the Super Bowl, 2 missing children were recovered during this effort.

Human Trafficking & Runaways--National Runaway Center Statistics

A strong connection appears to exist between human trafficking and runaways. Human Trafficking victims are often targeted for their vulnerability, and thus runaway children are prime targets as victims of trafficking. According to the National Runaway Center, between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth are runaways every year. Runaways are almost always running **from** something horrific in the home, the most common issue being sexual abuse. **Over 80% of runaway youth are victims of sexual and other physical abuse at home.** Words such as "throwaway youth" are used today to describe unwanted children, but no child or teen ever deserves to be a throwaway child. The same Center reports that almost 30% of runaways are trafficked while other sources put the statistic at a much higher rate--over 60%. Watch for more information on studies and research under way on this important subject.

Healing-- A Journey

Every newsletter will contain a section on healing trauma, just as this first edition includes. Each person has his or her own journey and path in life, and pain to heal, whether a victim of crime or a victim of other life circumstances. May life bring spring flowers, hope and healing for all.

